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OREGON OPERATIONS OFFICE

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EPA-REGION 10

U.S. EPA
ATTN: Harbor Comments
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I knew that part of the Willamette River that goes through downtown Portland had been designated as a Superfund cleanup site some years ago, but I didn't realize until recently just how extensive the Environmental Protection Agency's current plans to clean it up really were. I understand the plan is to dig up large portions of the riverbed and transfer the hazardous materials to landfill sites. This would just stir up the water, and the contaminated materials on the bottom of the river would start flowing back up to the surface again. It would not only re-contaminate the site, but it would move the contaminated materials somewhere else to be a problem there.

A recent study has shown that really good progress has been taking place in the river through the natural restoration process of the river itself. I think that if nature is taking care of the problem, we should leave it alone and let nature handle it. Nature knows what it's doing more than the government does. The 40% reduction in contamination that the latest study showed indicates just that.

The EPA said the project would cost over a billion dollars, and then it revised that estimate down to \$746 million. This concerns me. Everything the government spends money on always takes longer and costs more than they say it will cost. People are tired of hearing that a project will only cost so much and then the cost inevitably overruns. The EPA also says this cleanup, which will seriously disrupt life and jobs along the river, should be done in seven years. I don't believe that either.

A billion dollars is a lot of money. It's not just loose change. That money would be better spent being given back to the people, in reducing taxes and other costs. I'm retired and live on a fixed income, and the higher taxes that this project could impose on residents like me would have a big impact. My wife is in a nursing home, and I have to pay those bills, too. I want to be able to provide the things she needs and that I want for her, but taxes are constantly being raised and that makes it hard. I'd rather see that money put into the economy rather than wasted on an over-reaching EPA cleanup project.

When I was younger, I fished on the river and enjoyed it often with friends. Taking away access to the river for years, and maybe even decades, would bring down the Portland economy. Jobs would be lost. The government is always saying, "Jobs, jobs, jobs." But now they want to turn around and destroy jobs. Where will the people go who lose those jobs? The Port of Portland is hurting enough right now because not enough ships are coming in. There are better solutions that work along with nature, that protect the river and also protect the people who live here. That's the type of plan that is needed.

Sincerely,

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